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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - MERCOSUR SUMMIT

11. On July 21, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000) carried a column by correspondent Alvaro Vargas Llosa entitled, "Chile's Three Fronts in Cordoba." Quotes:

"The Mercosur summit began yesterday offering Chile three elements of tension: Evo Morales, Nestor Kirchner, and Hugo Chavez.... With regard to Chavez...Chile is under Washington's pressure to try to block Venezuela's candidacy (to the UNSC) and under pressure from Caracas to facilitate it.... Mercosur..., which is already pitiful because of its internal problems, has now incorporated Chavez, and the main course for this Summit...is the signature of an agreement with Cuba.... For Chile, which is part of the 'reasonable' governments in Latin America, this is not good news. Because one thing is to show Chavez and Castro affection and avoid ideological confrontations, but it is a completely different matter to form part of a strategy to take Mercosur down a political path in which Santiago has no interest.

"What interests Santiago is to become part of the Latin America club, extend its ties to different fronts, and resolve energy problems. But this is not what the Venezuelan President wants. What Chavez wants is to form an anti-U.S. political platform...and take South America and the Caribbean along a path of political animosity with Washington.... Castro's arrival in Cordoba shows the degree of political energy that Chavez is already deploying in the South American bloc.... The Castro-Chavez-Morales trio will attend the alternative counter-Summit in Cordoba, and after that Chavez will begin a tour to other countries...to gain votes...and win the battle he is waging with Washington over Venezuela's candidacy in the Security Council.... A Mercosur with members and associate countries with diverging goals and contradicting views, as those represented by the Chavez-Morales-Castro trio on the one hand, and Chile on the other, can hardly be productive."

12. On July 21, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807) carried a column by Karin Ebensperger entitled, "Bolivia and its Eternal Demand for the Sea." Quote:

"There is something that is it not explained clearly enough in international affairs or repeated often enough. Chile offered Bolivia access to the sea but Peru refused.... The view in the international public opinion is that Chile owes Bolivia something, and that that country cannot grow because it has no sea. This view is wrong.... Chile has tried to please Bolivia with a corridor, and although Bolivia demands that none of its gas sold to Argentina reach Chile, the people and all governments in Chile have made endless efforts to promote bilateral trade, granting granted Bolivia the maximum facilities so that it can export its products through the Pacific."

YAMAUCHI